

Project Improving Access to Care: Working Together



Los Angeles Representatives at the 2005 Frequent Users of Health Services Initiative 3rd Annual Meeting
Pictured L to R: Nanette Litturi PIAC Project Coordinator, John Horn Los Angeles Family Housing, Eileen Maronde Los Angeles Department of Mental Health, José C. Salazar Tarzana Treatment Center and PIAC Project Director, Stephanie Johnson Olive View- UCLA Medical Center, Joni Novosel Valley Care Community Consortium, Thomas Garthwaite, MD Los Angeles DHS

Last year, the LAC Department of Health Services began collaborating with Tarzana Treatment Center and other partners of the Valley Care Community Consortium to engage in an effort to decrease costly and inefficient use of emergency room services at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center.

Project Improving Access to Care (PIAC) finished its first year at Olive View- UCLA Medical Center's Emergency Department. PIAC, a three-year project which uses an intensive case management approach and a harm reduction model, has enrolled 56 clients of which 37 are currently active (receiving case management) as of October 2005. Nanette Litturi, Project Coordinator along with Case Managers Rozell Robinson and Walter Garcia each carry case loads and works diligently to create the perfect balance of outreach to new clients and case management of existing clients.

PIAC represents a collaborative effort by community based organizations and county departments, that seeks to address the health needs of frequent users of emergency department services. This initiative is led by Tarzana Treatment Center and funded jointly by The California Endowment and the California Healthcare Foundation. On October 6, 2005 members of PIAC's Steering Committee attended the Frequent Users of Health Services Initiative 3rd Annual Meeting (pictured above) along with Thomas Garthwaite, MD, Director, Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. Dr. Garthwaite was one of four stakeholders that participated as a member of a panel discussion.

PIAC was one of six Frequent Users of Health Services Initiative grantees in California. The other five are located in Alameda, Sacramento, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Tulare counties. Each of the five addresses the issue of overcrowded, over utilized, inappropriate use of emergency rooms in their own unique ways. In Los Angeles a patient qualifies for PIAC services if they are 18 years of age (or older), have visited the ED five or more times in a 12-month period, are publicly insured or uninsured and have one or more of the following: homelessness, substance abuse (drugs or alcohol), and/or mental illness.

For more information about Project Improving Access to Care Program contact Nanette Litturi, Project Coordinator at 818-364-3754 or nlitturi@tarzanatc.org.